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Pacific School of Religion Berkeley, Cal.

Vol. XV No. 3

YALE DIVINITY QUARTERLY

Published by
The Students of the School of Religion of Yale University

JANUARY, 1919

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Entered as second-class matter May 26th, 1904, at the Post Office at New Haven, Conn., under the act of Congress of March 3d, 1879.

Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 8, 1918.

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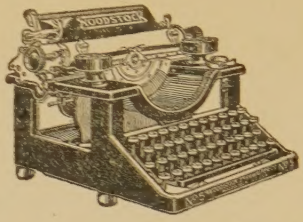

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Yale Divinity Quarterly

VOL. XV JANUARY, 1919 No. 3

EXPERIMENTS IN EDUCATION AMONG BRITISH TROOPS ON ACTIVE SERVICE.

JOHN CLARK ARCHER.

No soldier of this war has done his work in a more complex and interesting environment than that which has surrounded the Greater Britisher on active service in Mesopotamia. He was not able, of course, without aid, to realize the complexity of it all, nor to exercise more than a superficial interest. But that he might get the most out of his unique surroundings, some provision was made in the Y. M. C. A. educational program organized in Mesopotamia under the direction of the writer as Educational Secretary.

There were hundreds of young men in the service who before enlisting were school boys, or students in their first, second, or third year at college. And there were thousands of men of meager mental equipment in whom new experiences kindled the desire to know more about the world and to fit themselves for that part of the world's work which might fall to them when the war was done.

In October, 1917, an Educational Program was drawn up in outline for use at Basrah in the Base camps. Revisions were made in the light of actual testing at a single camp, and the program grew from camp to camp and from zone to zone until it resulted in a comprehensive scheme of education for the whole Mesopotamian field. These efforts were in recognition of the need and the desire of the soldier for something in addition to mere food and amusement, and for something more intensive than the casual educational opportunities he had had through the Y. M. C. A. Meeting that need and satisfying that desire—even to a much less than ideal extent—contributed much to the making of

better men and more efficient soldiers. The program aimed to help the soldiers spend their spare time happily and otherwise profitably, and to contribute thus to the victorious ending of the war. From the very beginning the military authorities co-operated fully in the undertaking which appeared to them beneficial to the morale of the forces.

The program was called the "University Plan." That seemed a not too pretentious term to use in the midst of conditions so void of educational opportunities. It was used, of course, in a popular sense; the men themselves liked it; it made a good impression and helped towards the ends in view. It was not altogether new, nor was it uniform for all centers. It sought rather to provide for the further development of valuable features already in use in the different huts, and to encourage in each hut a normal expansion with emphasis upon education; and in so doing it did not lessen the attention given to other features.

It provided a schedule of lectures and discussions which, by reason of the wide variety of subjects, the competence of the lecturers and the grouping of the attendants, created to some extent a scholastic atmosphere. Wherever those "university" privileges were offered, the men took advantage of them eagerly and in great and often overwhelming numbers.

The plan is some detail might be described as follows:

1. It stood for something of *intensity* and *sequence*. The work was done in connection with small groups of men who met in fair-sized rooms or tents. Such arrangement eliminated distraction and afforded an atmosphere of intimacy and informality in which men felt free to engage in discussion. Discussion was of great importance, for it not only involved the materials presented in the lectures, but provided place again and again for delightful and profitable "asides,"—lessons, it might have been, in morals and religion whose value was beyond estimate. For example, picture to yourself a small tent filled by a hundred men or more, and tobacco smoke. The occasion is one of several simultaneous discussions of various themes. The men who have come to this particular tent have chosen to come and hear, for instance, something about "The Man Who Made Arabia Famous." It is, let us say, "out in the blue" in a camp to which the British had fought

their way above Baghdad. It might just as well have been at Nasiriyah under the shadow of Ur of the Chaldees, or at Kut al-Amarah, which the heroic Townshend lost after a bitter seige and the gallant Maude retook; or it might have been at any of the base camps. It is Mohammedan country, although Jews, Sabians and various Christian sects mingle with the Moslem population. The lecture likely included some such words as follows: (from the writer's personal experience)

"Men, the great Man of Arabia came to hate drink. He came to hate it and rule it forever out of his system of religion. That doesn't mean that Moslems do not touch nor taste alcholic liquors. Turks drink a great deal, and they are supposed to be orthodox. It may be they assume that the Prophet's injunction was against wine only! Arabs also drink; and they don't mind touching the stuff. Has any Arab tried to sell you bottled goods? Look out, if you have less than three stripes on your sleeve! But all such conduct on the part of the Mohammedans is really contrary to the will of their prophet.

"One day Hamzah, a sturdy member of Mohammed's small but growing band and a mighty arm in battle, became drunk, noisy and destructive in a Meccan street. It was all very disgusting to Mohammed. Drink had got the upper hand of one of his followers and a capable fighter. In due season the Prophet came forth with a 'revelation' forbidding forever any indulgence in intoxicating beverages. This is plainly written in the Moslem's Holy Book.

"Whatever the motive at the time, and it may not have been purely moral, Mohammed set himself against a gigantic system of iniquity. Let us be frank. Christians were known to Mohammed and the early Moslems as wine-bibbers. And, men, I could go with you in and out through the streets of Baghdad or any city here and, with eyes shut, tell you who keep the liquor shops. Maybe one keeper out of ten will be a Jew, but the Jew's share in the business usually goes no further than wholesaling. There will not be one Mohammedan! The nine or more out of ten will be Christian! Yes, perhaps, degenerate *Chaldaean* Christians—they seem to be the scum of the Tigris—but they bear the Name. And my point is, the traffic is somehow linked up here with Christianity.

"What are we doing to set things right? We all know very well there's something wrong! My friends, why has old England almost no conscience on Drink? I have just come through London. People are hungry there. Yet I read one day with my own eyes the boast of a big brewery that it had made more profit this year than last by £100,000. I know that once the Basrah Y. M. C. A. couldn't get a truck for the shipment of supplies up the line. The officers had to have their Japanese beer,—some of the nine thousand cases stacked up at the time in Magil Station!

"We know that these sects of Oriental Christians are not truly representing the good Gospel of Jesus Christ. And *we're* a little behind, too. It's a little uncomfortable to be living in such surroundings as these, isn't it? Oh, yes, I know your feeling about *Mesopot.* Glad to be out, eh? Blighty and Mesopot are two extremes, aren't they? But what I mean is this: it's rather uncomfortable to be representing a christian, drinking nation in the midst of Mohammedans, whose conscience goes at least so far that they dare not run a "pub." An adequate and saving faith—and that's what Christianity at heart is—makes no allowance at all for practices and attitudes which are destructive of good human qualities. It is desirable for us to stand morally justified, as well as politically, in the eyes of these people of Islam, and by our sobriety stand as a rebuke to those of our kin who take the Christian Gospel in vain."

The soldiers would take all this in the best of spirit as part of the regular program. There is room for one more consideration; let it be somewhat doctrinal in content. The occasion is as before, but with the subject of Moslem sects under discussion; Sunnis and Shiahs, in particular.

The latter are fundamentally mystical; they lay stress upon direct blood-line from Mohammed and his family as requisite for prophetic succession; they believe in visible and invisible leaders on whom the Light shines as it shone on the Great Prophet; these are God's witnesses ever present, even though unseen, in the world. The former, the Sunnis, are "orthodox," literalistic, adherents of the elective principle of religious leadership rather than that of lineal descent from Mohammed. Persians are the outstanding Shiahs. Turks and Arabs are Sunnis. "Shiah" means

"sect," a sort of Islamic Protestantism. "Sunnah" is "Way," the way of the Prophet which the Sunni treads (?).

Such and other details would be presented in popular fashion to the audience, in an effort to portray faithfully something of the religious characteristics of the bulk of the people among whom the soldier's lot was cast for the time. Shiah shrines abound in Mesopotamia, as Kerbela, Kadhimain and Najaf; and tombs of Shiah saints are scattered about the broad sands. But the Sunnis are numerically as strong as the Shiahs in that part of the world. Abundant concrete material was at hand for the discussion. But to the point! The discussion would be entered upon with the understanding that the auditors would line up, at the end, with one party or the other, according to the impressions gained from the discussion. (Some essential materials were always reserved for later use). At the appointed time some such conversation as follows would ensue.

"Well, how about it, men? Which party do you prefer?" 'I think, sir, I should be a Shiah, if a Mohammedan at all.' "Let's see if you could be a Shiah. Do you believe in temporary marriage, marriages just for the night?" 'Not at all, sir; looks like thin disguise for immorality.' "Then you can't be a Shiah." . . . "Try again. Do you believe in such a doctrine as that of Taqiya (explained as a Jesuitical doctrine that the end justifies the means, that lips may belie the heart with impunity, etc.)?" The answer usually came, whether from Protestant or Catholic, in the negative and thus Shiah was ruled out on another count.

Many men were sure to show preference for the Sunnis. "Very well, let us see. Do you believe—although the institution is not true of the Sunnis, the figure is to the point—that the man who administers the sacrament should be a man of clean life, or is the efficacy entirely in the emblems? . . . Or, again, do you want the man who preaches to be a man of clean life or is the value entirely in the service?" Whatever the creed or communion of the men the usual reply was an insistence upon upright lives for ministers and priests. Thus was Sunnah ruled out wherein dependence is so entirely upon form. This procedure was somewhat daring at times and yet always met with proper response. It served as a significant test of the sort of religion the men of the army wanted. It must be *life* first, whatever else.

Such discussion was never left without pressing home a further consideration. It was pointed out that Mesopotamia was one of the finest laboratories of religion, that non-christian systems might be studied with a fair degree of impartiality and that even the Oriental Christian sects might be viewed with some abstraction. It would thereupon be shown that the judgments reached, with whatever impartiality, concerning faiths other than one's own might be transferred with profit to one's own. In such case the fair-minded man abides by the results.

The interest of the writer was in such reconsideration of the principles of religion that the fundamental truths of Christianity might be made prominent and that men might be led to seek first of all the Kingdom of Christ. Mesopotamia afforded occasion for the practical demonstration of the values of a comparative study of religion. What a man condemns elsewhere may well be questioned if found to be an item of his own faith. And what elsewhere is worthy of approval may become a means of sympathy with other men. It is no small matter that men of war should gain distinct and accurate impressions of the religious phenomena of peoples into whose midst their campaigning has led them. It is vastly more important that men read out of strange environments lessons for the growth and adjustment of their own faith, reckoning both with rebuke and approval at the hands of other systems, and counting it all gain. The writer saw nothing but gain for Christ in the program one aspect of which has been all too briefly sketched here.

Because of the generally transient character of the men each lecture sought to be, as far as possible, a unit in itself, a clear and definite statement to the audience which attended. The arrangement afforded, as well, an opportunity for any given man to get within a brief period new glimpses into many fields. It did not prevent the continuation of lectures in serial form which men so disposed might attend with some regularity.

No small benefit of the plan to the men was its inducement to further study. It happened not infrequently that they not only availed themselves of all the immediate sources of information, but also laid by suggestions for carrying on their study after the war. Books were arranged in reference libraries and put in quieter places than the general reading rooms.

2. The plan stood not only for intensity and sequence, but for *variety* also. Several lectures were scheduled for the same hour in different parts of the same camp. This gave the men opportunity to choose what they wanted to hear; and, in addition, it compelled them to accept some responsibility for the program. Having chosen a certain subject their interest was at least to that extent pledged at once to the discussion of it—a quality not always found on the occasion of a general lecture to all the men in mass. The options served to sort out the men automatically.

On any given evening there was variety, e. g., Chemistry, Physiology, Moslems, Philosophy, Electricity, Current Events. And instead of the solitary weekly general lecture there were under the plan in any one camp from six to twenty lectures each week on from three to a dozen different subjects.

In spite of any rapid changes in the personnel of the groups, there were usually men long enough in the camp to insure continuity for several weeks at least, if indeed there were not many men permanently stationed at the center. For this reason an attempt was made to make a fairly well-balanced program out of the varied subjects. It was not a schedule of requirements but a suggestion and reminder of the whole field. And it had the average man in mind; *actual army conditions had to be considered.* The leader in any center might discover peculiar interests and needs and be governed accordingly. Or in view of local conditions, he might decide upon a few main headings in accordance with which he chose minor topics for his schedule. He then sought lecturers in accord with the program, rather than accommodate his schedule to available lecturers. In general, however, in that ill-provided field of war, until better equipment came, each leader had to make the most of whatever materials he could find at hand.

Something further might be said regarding the operation of the Plan. What has been written applies only to the British elements in the Army; the scheme for the Indian troops who numbered twenty-five per cent of the total forces had of necessity a different character. The educational work for them is not discussed in this article. Definite religious work was possible among the white troops. Religious services were held regularly under Y. M. C. A.

auspices, in addition to the ministry of the chaplains. It was often the chaplain who conducted the Association service. And here and there special evangelistic campaigns were undertaken in connection with the regular educational plan. The War Roll was used freely and many names were registered. But no such work could be done among the Indian troops and labor corps. They were Mohammedan, Sikh, and Hindu for the most part. There were, of course, many Indian Christians among the forces. Chaplains were provided for these and the Association served them in various ways. But the ministry of the Christian Association to the non-christian elements was, by order, of an entirely non-religious character. The Association, however, sought to serve in such a way—educationally, and otherwise—that the Indians would appreciate the christian motive back of the service. There were many Indian Christian secretaries at work and hosts of Indian troops enjoyed the privileges afforded them by the Y. M. C. A. At the same time camp mosques and temples and shrines—camp mosques, when regular mosques were beyond reach—provided the various non-christian soldiers places of worship. Up the Karun River, for example, there was an Indian camp which had all four buildings in its midst, the Y. M. C. A. hut, the Mohammedan mosque, the Sikh shrine and the Hindu temple. And there appeared to be peace which was not due entirely to military discipline.

In the early stages of the educational program there were no precedents and very few available materials. Useful books were at once organized and lantern slides were arranged for intensive rather than general use. And as familiarity with the field grew, large orders were despatched for more books and slides and subsidiary materials. The Army furnished additional tents for class use, and from the heads of various military departments apparatus and materials for experimentation were obtained. And when Y .M. C. A. autos were not available for the transportation of lecturers and equipment, the Army provided the means. The Educational Secretary got around by train, auto, bicycle and "shanks' mare."

Lecturers were usually to be found in sufficient number to carry on a fairly full and comprehensive program in any camp. The

Association secretary was generally one of them. Neighboring secretaries were sometimes available, as were chaplains, officers, privates, and civilians. Among the last-named were a few missionaries who gladly gave their valuable services. This was "faculty" material obtained without expense. There were university men among the officers, including some former members of university faculties. There were privates who were university graduates or otherwise qualified to aid in the work; they might have been school-masters or lecturers before enlisting. There were men with technical knowledge who, though without previous experience at lecturing, gave very interesting and profitable lectures. All these lectures were provided without cost to the soldiers. Native language teachers were often paid for their services; in that case, the members of the classes paid a nominal fee for instruction. A soldier drawing a shilling a day couldn't spend much in fees, however.

There were some two hundred thousand men in the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. Recent word from that area—a letter of October 14th, 1918—says there are now ninety-six members of the Y. M. C. A. staff and more than one hundred centers of Association work. This is an increase over the figures for last spring. The educational program has likewise made marked progress since then. The aim of the program was to add to the Association ministries of refreshment and entertainment the ministry of education. And it was found to afford increased emphasis on the religious aspects of the work. It was a program which, at the first, was not undertaken primarily for purposes of education as such, but rather that educational facilities might be the means to morale, morality, and spiritual culture. This is doubtless the policy still, though the program must be far better organized now than it was last May when the writer left Baghdad and soon after gave up the office of Educational Secretary for Mesopotamia.

Yale Divinity Quarterly

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PREPARING FOR THE NEW DAY.

The New Day is already upon us—at least, that is what we are being told by those who read the weather vanes of thought currents. Some of us have not yet seen its sunrise or looked upon its light; but, nevertheless, it is here. As students preparing for the responsibilities and grave exigencies which will be ours in the New Day, we look upon it in all seriousness and with much thought. Will we be prepared and made ready for it? Are our "armaments already obsolete"? Reconstruction everywhere! Have we the insight, the message, the "tools" for the labors of the Day? Are we "up-to-the-very-last-minute" in our equipment for our work? These are serious question being reflected in the conversations between students. Today a student asked, "What is the use of our studying what Origen thought? What has that to do with problems of this age?" And another one replied, "Who cares today what he thought and believed?" The trend of the age is toward the practical, toward the utilitarian, toward the pragmatic. What is not of use we deem "impedi-

menta"; what is not practical we deem theoretical or visionary and therefore worthless. Under the delimitation of thought which the war forced upon us, confining us almost wholly to it, we have taken up the cry so often sounded here in the Homeland, "Get something which will do the work—and get it quickly"; and are sounding it now in the stress of the Day. The Curriculum of the School has been and is now being dissected, put under the lens and examined carefully; the result of which has been the condemnation by some of the students of both a few required and few elective studies. There has never been a curriculum established which has met with the whole indorsement of those who had to take it—no, never, since there have been students and curricula! But the tone of comment being heard now is not that of the idle and superficial critic, but is the serious, solemn, sincere tone which comes from those who are deeply interested in their preparation for the New Day. Certain studies are judged as valueless for the time; certain others are tolerated as inevitable; certain others are accepted as beneficial and of value; and certain others, it must be admitted, are quite in advance of the Day. Time and time again one hears, "What's the use of that?" These comments are not born of mere dissatisfaction, and they are not produced by any feeling of suspicion of confideence in the School or its splendid Faculty, but they are the reflection of the insistent, determined, irrepressible inquiry which springs up in the mind of the sincere and consecrated student when he looks toward the New Day: Am I ready? Am I prepared? Will my training be found sufficient? Much impinges on the answer to the question—much for the student, much for the School and much for the future of the Church.

There has never been a time when a heavier or holier responsibility rested upon our schools than now; the task and work of theological seminaries is especially important.. The future depends upon the quality and kind of preparation which they make possible. The Church is under fire; it must prove its worth and right to exist in the New Day, and the theological seminaries have the tremendous task of preparing the leaders of the Church in that period of testing and proving.

It is our belief that our School is in every sense a training school for the New Day. Yale has always been an institution of vision, and has blazed trails in many fields of work. The School of Religion, true to Yale traditions, is alive and awake to the call and demands of the time. "Talents differ," and of those who shall go out from its halls, some may not be able to catch the stride of rebuilding and remaking going on, and it is our opinion that such failure shall rest upon the individual and not upon the institution. Some courses may appear to have no value for the Day; and we suspect that there are students in scientific courses who think the study of the "Hydra" or the dissection of "Lumbricus Hercules" or of "Rana Pipens" has nothing to do with the understanding of the "genus Homo." Such hack work may seem to them to be a waste of time;

nevertheless they are not prepared to solve the more difficult problems of biology until they have mastered the simpler ones. To study what some long forgotten saint said about Lapsarianism may not appear to have any bearing on the theological difficulties of the age, but the student is not competent to diagnose the trouble of his day if he doesn't know all possible troubles, for the trouble may be a lapse into Lapsarianism, which he could not recognize and, hence, with which he could not deal.

But whatever our opinion may be, the matter deserves a frank, candid and snicere discussion. When we go out to wrestle with the powers and elements which sweep in with the New Day we must be adequately equipped and prepared, if the light, the glory and the blessing of that day be preserved for those in whose stead we now stand.

SCHOOL NOTES.

The rather large number of students in the School of Religion who were unable to go to their homes for the Thanksgiving recess, were entertained by the Y. M. C. A. in the Lowell Mason room with a "Get-To-Gether." The room had been beautifully decorated in a way suggestive of the season. The early part of the evening was spent in the old fashioned games usually associated with the autumnal holidays. An informal "sing" was followed by refreshments. The social committee arranged the entertainment and Mr. F. C. Allen was in charge of the program.

The Community Thanksgiving service, held in Woolsey Hall on Thanksgiving Day, was rather remarkable in some of its aspects. Dean Brown delivered the address, Rabbi Mann read the Scriptures, and Father Coyle offered prayer. Such meetings were somewhat common during the war for patriotic purposes, but it is not usual that Protestant, Hebrew and Catholic are united in such a service. It portends much for the future, and is indicative of the awakened spirit of unity and harmony which should have characterized these faiths in former years.

The Campbell Club held its first meeting of the year, December 19th, at the home of Professor Archer. The evening was spent largely in discussing various aspects of the war and religious conditions growing out of it. W. Vernon Lytle called for a short business session and Percy A. Davis was elected president, and Elmo B. Higham secretary for the year. Refreshments were served.

With the close of the war students are beginning to return to school and conditions are becoming something like normal. Already twelve new students have entered. It has been made possible for them to complete the year's work, and in this way they will not be compelled to lose that part of the year already gone.

On the evening of December 16, the members of the School of Religion Faculty were delightfully entertained at the home of Prof.and Mrs. Archer. Prof. Archer gave a very interesting and entertaining talk on his experiences in Mesopotamia, illustrating it with slides made from photographs which he made while there with the British Armies. Refreshments were served by Mesdames Archer and Beach. The evening was given added interest by the unexpected arrival of Prof. Macintosh who had just returned from France.

Mr. Ostrum who for some years past has been a missionary in Japan spoke to the student body during the regular Chapel hour on December 17. His message was very timely and interesting, especially since one of the most perplexing international questions is the place Japan is to occupy in the future. In his opinion Japan will be the dominant power of the Far East, and will rank favorably with the larger Western Powers. For this reason the Christianizing of Japan is imperative.

Prof. Macintosh returned from France on December 16, where he had been doing work with the Y. M. C. A. He has much to say of great interest and moment at this time.

The increasing student body and the decline of war activities has made possible the reorganization of a basket ball team. In former years Hartford and Union have been the eager opponents of the prowess of the Yale School of Religion; and as the prospects for a splendid team are good, it is hoped that some games can be arranged. Messrs. Wigfall, Reidt, Higham, Sholte and Cummins have been getting in fit condition in anticipation of coming contests.

Lieut. George Stewart, a former student, once in the Y. M. C. A. at Devens, and later enlisted in the Army, is now in School.

The Missionary Convention held at Hartford, December 10-13, was attended by several students and Faculty members. New fields are now open and old fields are presenting new opportunities. Stress was laid on the great need of men to take the stations open. Messrs. Wayne Edwards, W. K. Allen, E. G. Garfield, A. H. Sholte, H. H. Washington, M. H, Schlicting and S. J. Theodore attended the conference.

Miss Katherine May Richmond was born on the 23 of December. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Enford Richmond.

One of the all too few survivors of the Canadian Contigent that fought in the first battle of Ypres entered Yale School of Religion this fall. He is Mr. C. O. Hawley of England. He spent almost four years in active service, finally being wounded and invalided from the service about one year ago. We are glad to have one of the number of that immortal Army with us.

Mr. S. H. Jamgoochian recently was instrumental in circulating a petition addressed to the Secretary of State, of the United States, asking that the independence of Armenia be granted and guaranteed by the Peace Conference. The readiness the men showed in signing that petition indicates the feeling of the men in school upon the matter. A similar petition has been circulated throughout the United States.

ATTENTION MEN!

We want to make the next issue of the QUARTERLY a "Student's Number," and hereby call upon you to give this your attention. What have you to say about the School? What have you to say about student questions and problems? What have you to say about the time and the age now upon us? What is it you would like to say to your fellow-students on any question?

This will give you that long wished for opportunity to "speak your mind." Use it!

Have you a theme, or paper, or a part of said theme or paper which you would like to have published in the QUARTERLY?

A box will be placed in the corridor of Edward's Hall into which you may place your contribution. Sign your name to your article.

Has the School of Religion some poets?

"THE SHORTER BIBLE."

BY PROF. KENT.

[By consent of the author, the following is reprinted from *The Yale News*, in which Prof. Dahl, of the School of Religion, explains the genius of a book that attracts wide attention.]

A book that has attracted a tremendous amount of attention during the year is "The Shorter Bible," as arranged by Professor Kent of the Yale College Faculty to simplify the Bible and to bring out its most prominent features for popular reading. A review of this work has been written for the *News* by Professor Dahl of the School of Religion, and follows:

"The time has come for a new and clearer understanding of the Bible and especially of the life and teachings of Jesus. If world problems now pressing for solution are to be met wisely, it will not do to ignore the contribution of the New Testament. But in spite of the fact that millions of Testaments are given away or sold every year, there is a most appalling ignorance among the majority of people of even the most elementary facts and teachings of the greatest of all books. Nor is this book of information confined to the uneducated; college students and even university professors are singularly uninformed in regard to the book that every educated man should know thoroughly.

"The reason for the prevalent ignorance is partly to be sought in the somewhat unattractive and confusing form in which the New Testament is usually issued. The arbitrary division of the book into numbered sentences, the illogical arrangement of the books themselves, the oftentimes difficult English of the translators, the presence of material of more importance for present conditions, and especially the placing side by side of four different lives of Christ with no attempt to rearrange their contents, all combine to make the book a closed one. As a consequence the reading becomes a real chore, and many miss the inspiration and enlightenment that ought to be found in the Testament. Others come to look upon it as in a sense a magical book, the reading of any part of which is equally helpful, not to say lucky.

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